

8 PHILOSOPHY IN ANCIENT INDIA



As soon as November and December come in we find new calendars flooding the market. Some calendars are very colourful. They are marked with different colours. Some even have small pictures on the dates. They are holidays and we look forward to them. You also look forward to them. Yes, they are religious festivals or national festivals and India has plenty of religions that are flourishing. Processions on the road, good food, clothes, gifts, people worshipping in their religious places, wishing each other is a common sight. Yes, India is a beautiful, lovely and a lively country to be in. This is because religion has always been a significant factor in influencing the lives of people in India from the earliest times. It would, indeed, be very interesting to study religion in its diverse forms through the various stages of its growth. The relationship between religion and philosophy has been an intimate one and hence their growth and development need to be studied in an interrelated manner. In this lesson you will study about the development of religions and philosophy in ancient India.

OBJECTIVES

After studying this lesson, you will be able to:

- *explain the meaning of religion;*
- *identify the characteristics of various religions movements in ancient India;*
- *explain the ideas of the six schools of Vedic philosophy;*
- *examine the role played by the Charvaka School;*
- *explain the Jaina theory of reality;*
- *examine the contributions of Buddhist philosophy.*

8.1 RELIGION

Religion is the science of soul. Morality and ethics have their foundation on religion. Religion played an important part in the lives of the Indians from the earliest times. It assumed numerous forms in relation to different groups of people associated with them. Religious ideas, thoughts and practices differed among these groups, and transformations and developments took place in the various religious forms in course of time. Religion in India was never static in character but was driven by an inherent dynamic strength.

Every system of philosophy in India is a quest for Truth, which is one and the same, always and everywhere. The modes of approach differ, logic varies, but the purpose remains the same – trying to reach that Truth.

“I am proud to belong to a religion which has taught the world tolerance and universal acceptance .. We believe not only in universal toleration, but we accept all religions as true.” – Swami Vivekananda at Parliament of world Religions in Chicago 1893 Indian spirituality is deeply rooted in ancient philosophical and religious traditions of the land. Philosophy arose in India as an enquiry into the mystery of life and existence. Indian sages called Rishis or ‘seers’, developed special techniques of transcending the sense and the ordinary mind collectively called yoga. With the help of these techniques, they delved deep into the depths of consciousness and discovered important truths about the true nature of human being and the universe. The sages found that the true nature of the human being is not the body or the mind, which are ever changing and perishable but the spirit which is unchanging, immortal and pure consciousness. They called it the Atman. The Atman is the true source of human’s knowledge, happiness and power. The rishis further found that all individual selves are parts of infinite consciousness which they called Brahman. Brahman is the ultimate reality, the ultimate cause of the universe. Ignorance of human’s true nature is the main cause of human suffering and bondage. By gaining correct knowledge of Atman and Brahman, it is possible to become free from suffering and bondage and attain a state of immortality, everlasting peace and fulfillment known as Moksha. Religion in ancient India meant a way of life which enables a human to realize his true nature and attain Moksha.

Thus philosophy provided a correct view of reality, while religion showed the correct way of life; philosophy provided the vision, while religion brought about the fulfillment; philosophy was the theory, and religion was the practice. Thus in ancient India, philosophy and religion complemented each other.

‘May we hear that which enlightens our minds, may we see Divinity everywhere, may we feel the presence of the Almighty within us and all the actions of our bodies and minds be in the service of that Almighty Being; may we have peace unending’. – (Rig-Veda 1-89)

8.2 PRE-VEDIC AND VEDIC RELIGION

From the archaeological findings in the pre and proto-historic sites it seems that these people believed in the sanctity of the creative force and venerated the male and female aspects of divinity. It appears that they were worshippers of the forces of nature like the sun and the moon. This belief is also partly substantiated by the early literature of the Aryans. The nature of the religious beliefs and practices of the Aryans is also known from the Rig Veda, They believed in many gods like Indra, Varuna, Agni, Surya and Rudra. Sacrifices, and ritual offering of food and drink to fire in honour of the Gods, constituted the main religious practices. The Sama Veda and the Yajur Veda elaborated the different aspects of the sacrificial acts and this ritualism was further elaborated in the Brahmanas. The Atharva Veda contained a great deal of animistic beliefs. The seers entertained doubts about the utility and efficacy of the Vedic ritualism. Polytheism was challenged by monotheistic ideas and the various deities were introduced as different ways of naming one eternal entity.

The Aranyaka and Upanishad sections of the Vedic literature envisage a progressive outlook. The Upanishads, represent the early stage in the origin and development of the religions metaphysical concepts which were used later by the religious leaders and reformers of

ancient and medieval India. Some of them followed the traditional lines while others proceeded along the paths of unorthodoxy.

- India down the ages attempted to grapple with the fundamental problems of life and thought. Philosophy in India began with a quest after the highest truth- truth not as mere objective certitude, but as being closely linked with the development of personality and leading to the attainment of the highest freedom, bliss and wisdom. It demanded, therefore, not only a philosophical discipline of reasoning, but also a discipline of conduct and the control of emotions and passions.
- Thus the synthesis between deep philosophical analysis and lofty spiritual discipline is an abiding feature of Indian philosophy and its outlook is entirely different from that of western philosophy.
- It is hoped that it will serve not only to make plain the spiritual aspirations of an ancient nation, but also to show the relevance of those aspirations to the modern world and thus forge a powerful link in the chain of human fellowship and universal concord.
- Philosophy in India is not a product of speculation but of experience, direct and personal. A true philosopher is he whose life and behavior bear testimony to the truths he preaches.

8.3 UNORTHODOX RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS

The religious movements associated with persons like Mahavira and the Buddha in about the middle of the first Millennium BC fall under this category. There were many other creeds during this time as well. The creeds preached by some of them contained elements that were not in keeping with the Vedic tradition. They ignored the infallibility and supernatural origin of the Vedas. Unlike the Vedic seers who were Brahmin sages, many of these new teachers were Kshatriya. Both Buddhism and Jainism were atheistic creeds in the beginning. However, Buddhism endorsed the doctrine of the Law of Karma and upheld the belief in rebirths of the embodied skandhas and the inevitability of suffering in the very existence of beings. Many of these view points are also found in the major Upanishads.

8.4 THEISTIC RELIGIONS

Creeds of theistic character evolved almost simultaneously with the non-theistic religions. The important deities of these religions were not primarily Vedic ones but those that came from unorthodox sources. Influence of pre-vedic and post-vedic folk elements were most conspicuous in their origin. The primary factor that motivated these creeds was Bhakti, the single-souled devotion of the worshipper to a personal god with some moral link. This led to the evolution of different religious sects like Vaishnavism, Shaivism and Saktism, which came to be regarded as components of orthodox Brahminism. These sects in course of time came to have a significant impact on the popular forms of Buddhism and Jainism.

8.5 FOLK CULTS

The worship of Yakshas and Nagas and other folk deities constituted the most important part of primitive religious beliefs, in which Bhakti had a very important role to play. There is ample evidence about the prevalence of this form of worship among the people in early literature as well as in archaeology.

Vasudeva/Krishna Worship: A Sutra in Panini's *Ashtadhyayi* refers to the worshippers of Vasudeva (Krishna). The Chhandogya Upanishad also speaks of Krishna, the son of Devaki, a pupil of the sage Ghora Angirasa who was a sun-worshipping priest. A large number of people worshipped Vasudeva Krishna exclusively as their personal God and they were at first known as Bhagavatas. The Vasudeva-Bhagavata cult grew steadily, absorbing within its fold other Vedic and Brahminic divinities like Vishnu

(primarily an aspect of the sun) and Narayana (a cosmic God). From the late Gupta period the name mostly used to designate this Bhakti cult was Vaishnava, indicating the predominance of the Vedic Vishnu element in it with emphasis on the doctrine of incarnations (*avataras*).

8.6 VAISHNAVA MOVEMENT IN THE SOUTH

The history of the Vaishnava movement from the end of the Gupta period till the first decade of the thirteenth century AD is concerned mainly with South India. Vaishnava poet-saints known as *alvars* (a Tamil word denoting those drowned in Vishnu-bhakti) preached single-minded devotion (*ekatmika bhakti*) for Vishnu and their songs were collectively known as *prabandhas*.

8.7 SHAIVISM

Unlike Vaishnavism, Shaivism had its origin in antiquity. Panini refers to a group of Shivaworshippers as Shiva-bhagavatas, who were characterised by the iron lances and clubs they carried and their skin garments.

Shaiva Movement in the South: The Shaiva movement in the South flourished at the beginning

through the activities of many of the 63 saints known in Tamil as Nayanars (Siva-bhaktis). Their appealing emotional songs in Tamil were called *Tevaram Stotras*, also known as *Dravida Veda* and ceremonially sung in the local Shiva temples. The Nayanars hailed from all castes. This was supplemented on the doctrinal side by a large number of Shaiva intellectuals whose names were associated with several forms of Shaiva movements like Agamanta, Shudha and Vira-shaivism.

The philosophy must give a theory which will be simplest in its nature and, at the same time, will explain all the principles which are left as insoluble by science. At the same time will harmonize with the ultimate conclusions of science as well as establish a religion which is universal and is not limited by sects or doctrines or dogmas.

When we are concerned with philosophy as a science, it means a set of thoughts put into a system, such that one of them does not contradict another in the set and the entire set as a whole is coherent.

‘Science means knowledge partially unified, while philosophy means knowledge completely unified Beyond the knowable is the unknowable, but in that realm of the unknowable laid the solution of all the principles regarding the nature of the soul, of the heavens, of God and everything.’

– Herbert Spencer

8.8 MINOR RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS

Worship of the female principle (Shakti) and of Surya did not achieve equal importance as the other two major brahminical cults. The female aspect of the divinity might have been venerated in the pre-Vedic times. In the Vedic age respect was shown also to the female principle as the Divine Mother, the Goddess of abundance and personified energy (Shakti). However, clear reference to the exclusive worshippers of the Devi is not to be found until a comparatively late period. As mentioned earlier, Surya has been venerated in India from the earliest times. In Vedic and epic mythology, Sun and his various aspects played a very important part. The East Iranian (Shakadvipi) form of the solar cult was introduced in parts of northern India in the early centuries of the Christian era. But it was only at a comparatively late period that god figured as the central object in religious movements.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 8.1

1. Which sections of the Vedic literature envisage a progressive outlook?

2. Which doctrine was endorsed by Buddhism?

3. Name the sects which made Buddhism and Jainism popular?

4. How did Vedic age respect female principle?

5. What are the different forms of Shaiva movements?

8.9 VEDIC PHILOSOPHY

Religion of the Rig Vedic people was very simple in the sense that it consisted mainly of worship of numerous deities representing the various phenomena of nature through prayers. It was during the later Vedic period that definite ideas and philosophies about the true nature of soul or Atman and the cosmic principle or Brahman who represented the ultimate reality were developed. These Vedic philosophical concepts later on gave rise to six different schools of philosophies called *shada darshana*. They fall in the category of the orthodox system as the final authority of the Vedas is recognised by all of them. Let us now find out more about these six schools of Indian philosophy.

Samkhya System

The Samkhya philosophy holds that reality is constituted of two principles one female and the other male i.e. Prakriti, Purusha respectively. Prakriti and Purusha are completely independent and absolute. According to this system, Purusha is mere consciousness, hence it cannot be modified or changed. Prakriti on the other hand is constituted of three attributes, thought, movement and the change or transformation of these attributes brings about the change in all objects. The Samkhya philosophy tries to establish some relationship between Purusha and Prakriti for explaining the creation of the universe. The propounder of this philosophy was Kapila, who wrote the *Samkhya sutra*.

Infact Samkhya school explained the phenomena of the doctrine of evolution and answered all the questions aroused by the thinkers of those days.

Yoga

Yoga literally means the union of the two principal entities. The origin of yoga is found in the *Yogasutra* of Patanjali believed to have been written in the second century BC. By purifying and controlling changes in the mental mechanism, yoga systematically brings about the release of purusha from prakriti. Yogic techniques control the body, mind and sense organs. Thus this philosophy is also considered a means of achieving freedom or *mukti*.

This freedom could be attained by practising self-control (*yama*), observation of rules (*niyama*), fixed postures (*asana*), breath control (*pranayama*), choosing an object (*pratyahara*) and fixing the mind (*dharna*), concentrating on the chosen object (*dhyana*) and complete dissolution of self, merging the mind and the object (*Samadhi*). Yoga admits the existence of God as a teacher and guide.

Nyaya

Nyaya is considered as a technique of logical thinking. According to Nyaya, valid knowledge is defined as the real knowledge, that is, one knows about the object as it exists. For example, it is when one knows a snake as a snake or a cup as a cup. Nyaya system of philosophy considers God who creates, sustains and destroys the universe. Gautama is

said to be the author of the Nyaya Sutras.

Vaisheshika

Vaisheshika system is considered as the realistic and objective philosophy of universe. The reality according to this philosophy has many bases or categories which are substance, attribute, action, genus, distinct quality and inherence. Vaisheshika thinkers believe that all objects of the universe are composed of five elements—earth, water, air, fire and ether. They believe that God is the guiding principle. The living beings were rewarded or punished according to the law of *karma*, based on actions of merit and demerit. Creation and destruction of universe was a cyclic process and took place in agreement with the wishes of God. Kanada wrote the basic text of Vaisheshika philosophy.

A number of treatises were written on this text but the best among them is the one written by Prashastapada in the sixth century AD.

Vaisheshika School of philosophy explained the phenomena of the universe by the atomic theory, the combination of atoms and molecules into matter and explained the mechanical process of formation of Universe.

Mimamsa

Mimamsa philosophy is basically the analysis of interpretation, application and the use of the text of the *Samhita* and *Brahmana* portions of the Veda. According to Mimamsa philosophy Vedas are eternal and possess all knowledge, and religion means the fulfilment of duties prescribed by the Vedas. This philosophy encompasses the Nyaya-Vaisheshika systems and emphasizes the concept of valid knowledge. Its main text is known as the Sutras of Gaimini which have been written during the third century BC. The names associated with this philosophy are Sabar Swami and Kumarila Bhatta.

The essence of the system according to Jaimini is Dharma which is the dispenser of fruits of one's actions, the law of righteousness itself. This system lays stress on the ritualistic part of Vedas.

Vedanta

Vedanta implies the philosophy of the Upanishad, the concluding portion of the Vedas.

Shankaracharya wrote the commentaries on the Upanishads, *Brahmasutras* and the *Bhagavad Gita*. Shankaracharya's discourse or his philosophical views came to be known as Advaita Vedanta. Advaita literally means non-dualism or belief in one reality.

Shankaracharya expounded that ultimate reality is one, it being the Brahman.

According to Vedanta philosophy, 'Brahman is true, the world is false and self and Brahman are not different, Shankaracharya believes that the Brahman is existent, unchanging, the highest truth and the ultimate knowledge. He also believes that there is no distinction between Brahman and the self. The knowledge of Brahman is the essence of all things and the ultimate existence. Ramanuja was another well known Advaita scholar.

Among different schools of philosophy was found one philosophy which reached the climax of philosophic thought that the human mind can possibly reach, and that is known as the Vedantic philosophy.

Vedanta philosophy has ventured to deny the existence of the apparent ego, as known to us, and in this respect Vedanta has its unique position in the history of philosophies of the world.

Vedanta is a philosophy and a religion. As a philosophy it inculcates the highest truths that have been discovered by the greatest philosophers and the most advanced thinkers of all ages and all countries.

Vedanta philosophy teaches that all these different religions are like so many roads, which lead to same goal.

Vedanta (the end of the Vedas or knowledge) refers to the Upanishads which appeared at the end of each Veda with a direct perception of reality.

The core message of Vedanta is that every action must be governed by the intellect – the discriminating faculty. The mind makes mistakes but the intellect tells us if the action is in our interest or not. Vedanta enables the practitioner to access the realm of spirit through the intellect. Whether one moves into spirituality through Yoga, meditation or devotion, it must ultimately crystallize into inner understanding for attitudinal changes and enlightenment.

8.10 CHARVAKA SCHOOL

Brihaspati is supposed to be the founder of the Charvaka School of philosophy. It finds mention in the Vedas and Brihadaranyka Upanishad. Thus it is supposed to be the earliest in the growth of the philosophical knowledge. It holds that knowledge is the product of the combination of four elements which leaves no trace after death. Charvaka philosophy deals with the materialistic philosophy. It is also known as the *Lokayata* Philosophy - the philosophy of the masses.

According to Charvaka there is no other world. Hence, death is the end of humans and pleasure the ultimate object in life. Charvaka recognises no existence other than this material world. Since God, soul, and heaven, cannot be perceived, they are not recognised by Charvakas. Out of the five elements earth, water, fire, air and ether, the Charvakas do not recognise ether as it is not known through perception. The whole universe according to them is thus consisted of four elements.

8.11 JAIN PHILOSOPHY

Like the Charvakas, the Jains too do not believe in the Vedas, but they admit the existence of a soul. They also agree with the orthodox tradition that suffering (pain) can be stopped by controlling the mind and by seeking right knowledge and perception and by observing the right conduct. The Jaina philosophy was first propounded by the *tirthankar* Rishabha Deva. The names of Ajit Nath and Aristanemi are also mentioned with Rishabha Deva. There were twenty-four *tirthankaras* who actually established the Jaina *darshan*. The first *tirthankar* realised that the source of Jaina philosophy was Adinath. The twentyfourth and the last *tirthankar* was named Vardhaman Mahavira who gave great impetus to Jainism. Mahavira was born in 599 BC. He left worldly life at the age of thirty and led a very hard life to gain true knowledge. After he attained Truth, he was called Mahavira. He strongly believed in the importance of celibacy or *brahamcharya*.

Jain Theory of Reality: Seven Kinds of Fundamental Elements

The Jainas believe that the natural and supernatural things of the universe can be traced back to seven fundamental elements. They are *jiva*, *ajivaa*, *astikaya*, *bandha*, *samvara*, *nirjana*, and *moksa*. Substances like body which exist and envelope (like a cover) are *astikaya*. *Anastikayas* like 'time' have no body at all. The substance is the basis of attributes (qualities). The attributes that we find in a substance are known as *dharmas*. The Jainas believe that things or substance have attributes. These attributes also change with the change of *kala* (time). From their point of view, the attributes of a substance are essential, and eternal or unchangeable. Without essential attributes, a thing cannot exist. So they are always present in everything. For example, consciousness (*chetana*) is the essence of the soul; desire, happiness and sorrow are its changeable attributes.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 8.2

1. How many schools of Shada Darshan exist?

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2. Name the founder of Samkhya Philosophy?
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3. Who is the originator of Yoga?
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4. Who is said to be the author of the nyaya Sutras?
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5. Which school of philosophy says Vedas are eternal and possess all knowledge?
-
6. What is the philosophy of the Upanishad?
-
7. Which school holds that knowledge is the product of the combination of four elements which leaves no trace after death?
-
8. How many ‘tirthankaras’ does Jaina Darshan have?
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9. When was Mahavira born?
-
10. Which ‘tirthankara’ was named Vardhman Mahavira?
-
11. Name the seven fundamental elements of Jainas?
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8.12 PHILOSOPHY OF THE BUDDHA

Gautama Buddha, who founded the Buddhist philosophy, was born in 563 BC at Lumbini, a village near Kapilavastu in the foothills of Nepal. His childhood name was Siddhartha. His mother, Mayadevi, died when he was hardly a few days old. He was married to Yashodhara, a beautiful princess, at the age of sixteen. After a year of the marriage, he had a son, whom they named Rahul. But at the age of twenty-nine, Gautama Buddha renounced family life to find a solution to the world’s continuous sorrow of death, sickness, poverty, etc. He went to the forests and meditated there for six years. Thereafter, he went to Bodhi Gaya (in Bihar) and meditated under a pipal tree. It was at this place that he attained enlightenment and came to be known as the Buddha. He then travelled a lot to spread his message and helped people find the path of liberation or freedom. He died at the age of eighty.

Gautama’s three main disciples known as Upali, Ananda and Mahakashyap remembered his teachings and passed them on to his followers. It is believed that soon after the Buddha’s death a council was called at Rajagriha where Upali recited the *Vinaya Pitaka* (rules of the order) and Ananda recited the *Sutta Pitaka* (Buddha’s sermons or doctrines and ethics). Sometime later the *Abhidhamma Pitaka* consisting of the Buddhist philosophy came into existence.

Main Characteristics

Buddha presented simple principles of life and practical ethics that people could follow easily. He considered the world as full of misery. Man’s duty is to seek liberation from this painful world. He strongly criticised blind faith in the traditional scriptures like the Vedas. Buddha’s teachings are very practical and suggest how to attain peace of mind and ultimate liberation from this material world.

Realization of Four Noble Truths. The knowledge realized by Buddha is reflected in the following four noble truths:

a. *There is suffering in human life.* When Buddha saw human beings suffering from sickness, pain and death, he concluded that there was definitely suffering in human life. There is pain with birth. Separation from the pleasant is also painful. All the passions that remain unfulfilled are painful. Pain also comes when objects of sensuous pleasure are lost. Thus, life is all pain.

b. *There is cause of suffering,* The second Noble Truth is related to the cause of suffering. It is desire that motivates the cycle of birth and death. Therefore, desire is the fundamental cause of suffering.

c. *There is cessation of suffering.* The third Noble Truth tells that when passion, desire and love of life are totally destroyed, pain stops. This Truth leads to the end of sorrow, which causes pain in human life. It involves destruction of ego (*aham or ahamkara*), attachment, jealousy, doubt and sorrow. That state of mind is the state of freedom from desire, pain and any kind of attachment. It is the state of complete peace, leading to *nirvana*.

d. *Path of Liberation.* The fourth Noble Truth leads to a way that takes to liberation. Thus, initially starting with pessimism, the Buddhist philosophy leads to optimism. Although there is a constant suffering in human life, it can be ended finally. Buddha suggests that the way or the path leading to liberation is eight-fold, through which one can attain *nirvana*.

Eight-fold Path to Liberation (*Nirvana*)

(i) *Right Vision.* One can attain right vision by removing ignorance. Ignorance creates a wrong idea of the relationship between the world and the self. It is on account of wrong understanding of man that he takes the non-permanent world as permanent. Thus, the right view of the world and its objects is the right vision.

(ii) *Right Resolve.* It is the strong will-power to destroy thoughts and desires that harm others. It includes sacrifice, sympathy and kindness towards others.

(iii) *Right Speech.* Man should control his speech by right resolve. It means to avoid false or unpleasant words by criticizing others.

(iv) *Right Conduct.* It is to avoid activities which harm life. It means to be away from theft, excessive eating, the use of artificial means of beauty, jewellery, comfortable beds, gold etc.

(v) *Right Means of Livelihood.* Right livelihood means to earn one's bread and butter by right means. It is never right to earn money by unfair means like fraud, bribery, theft, etc.

(vi) *Right Effort.* It is also necessary to avoid bad feelings and bad impressions. It includes self-control, stopping or negation of sensuality and bad thoughts, and awakening of good thoughts.

(vii) *Right Mindfulness.* It means to keep one's body, heart and mind in their real form. Bad thoughts occupy the mind when their form is forgotten. When actions take place according to the bad thoughts, one has to experience pain.

(viii) *Right Concentration.* If a person pursues the above seven Rights, he will be able to concentrate properly and rightly. One can attain *nirvana* by right concentration (meditation).

Except for Charvaka school, realisation of soul has been the common goal of all philosophical schools of India.

According to Victor Cousin, the great French Philosopher, 'India contains the whole history of philosophy in a nutshell'. Again he says: 'When we read with attention the poetical and philosophical monuments of the East, above all those of India, which are beginning to spread in Europe, we discover there many a truth and truths so

profound, and which make such a contrast with the meanness of the results at which the European genius has sometimes stopped. That we are constrained to bend the knee before the philosophy of the East, and to see in this cradle of the human race the native land of the highest philosophy.’

I am sure you would like to know more about Buddhism. We will go to Bodhgaya in Bihar. Tread reverently along this ancient path. Begin with the Mahabodhi tree where something strange happened - realization of truth or spiritual illumination. Tradition states that Buddha stayed in Bodhgaya for seven weeks after his enlightenment.

There you must also see the Animeshlocha Stupa which houses a standing figure of the Buddha with his eyes fixed towards this tree. Bodhgaya is also revered by the Hindus who go to the Vishnupada temple to perform ‘Pind-daan’ that ensures peace and solace to the departed soul.

You can also visit Rajgir and empathise with the Chinese traveller Fa-hein who visited this place 900 years after the death of Buddha. He wept over the fact that he was not fortunate enough to listen to the sermons of Buddha that were delivered here. Many stories which you might have read about Buddha have their origin here. Imagine Buddha on his first alms begging mission while staying in a cave here. It was here that the Mauryan king Bimbisara joined the Buddhists order. Remember reading the story how a mad elephant was let loose by Devadutta to kill Buddha. Well, this incident took place here. Finally it was from Rajgir that Buddha set out on his last journey. The first Buddhist Council was held in the Saptaparni cave in which the unwritten teachings of Buddha were penned down after his death. Even the concept of monastic institutions was laid at Rajgir which later developed into an academic and religious centre.

In your lesson on Architecture, you will read about Nalanda university. It was established in the 5th century BC. It is the world’s earliest university. Since Buddha encouraged learning, monks and scholars gathered here for discourses. So much so that by 5th B.C., Nalanda acquired the position of a well established monastery under the Guptas.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 8.3

1. What was the childhood name of Gautama Buddha?

2. Where did Gautama Buddha meditate?

3. Where did Gautama Buddha get enlightenment?

4. What does the Sutta Pitaka contain?

5. Who recited the Vinaya Pitaka?

6. What are the four noble truth of Gautama Buddha?

7. Which philosophical school of India has difference of opinion about realization of soul?

WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

- Origin of religion can be traced to the pre-vedic society.
- Developments in religion in ancient India proceeded along the traditional lines as well as along the paths of unorthodoxy.
- The systems of Indian philosophy that originated from the Vedas are called Orthodox systems.

- Samkhya philosophy holds that reality is constituted of the self and non-self that is *purusha* and *prakriti*.
- Yoga is a very practical philosophy to realise the 'Self'.
- Nyaya presents a technique of logical thinking.
- Vaisheshika gives us the principles of reality which constitute the universe.
- Mimamsa philosophy is basically the analysis of the Vedic scriptures.
- Charvakism, Jainism and Buddhism are known as the unorthodox systems.
- Charvaka is the materialistic philosophy, it believes that there is no existence other than matter.
- According to Jain philosophy, liberation is the escape of jiva from matter (body).
- Buddha reflected his knowledge in four noble Truths (i) There is suffering in human life (ii) There is cause of suffering (iii) There is end to suffering and (iv) There is way to end suffering.
- Buddha suggested eight fold path for liberation. These are: (i) right vision (ii) right resolve (iii) right speech (iv) right conduct (v) right means of livelihood (vi) right effort (vii) right mindfulness and (viii) right concentration.

TERMINAL EXERCISE

1. Define the various characteristics of religious movements of ancient India?
2. What was the role played by Charvaka School in the religious movement of India?
3. How does the Charvaka School differ from the other philosophical schools?
4. Explain how Shada Darshana falls in the category of an orthodox system.
5. How does Buddhist philosophy contribute to become a better human being?
6. How can you say that Mimamsa philosophy is basically the analysis of Vedic scriptures?

ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

8.1

1. The Aranyaka and Upanishad
2. Law of Karma
3. Vaishnavism, Shaivism, Saktism
4. Divine mother, the goddess of abundance and personified energy(shakti).
5. Agamanta, Shudha and Vira-shaivism

8.2

1. Six
2. Kapila who wrote the Samkhya sutras.
3. Yogasutra of Patanjali
4. Gautama
5. Mimamsa school
6. Vedanta, the concluding portion of Vedas.
7. Charvaka School
8. 24
9. 599 B.C.
10. Twenty fourth or the last tirthankar.
11. Jiva, Ajivaa, Astikaya, Bandha, Samvara, Nirjana, Moksa.

8.3

1. Siddhartha
2. Under a Peepal tree at Bodh Gaya, Bihar
3. Bodh Gaya, Bihar
4. Buddha's sermons, or doctrines and ethics.
5. Upali
6. There is suffering in human life.

There is cause of suffering.
There is cessation of suffering.
Path of Liberation.
7. Charvaka School

